

79257-8
cy 8

~~SECRET~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

15 June 1954

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

SUBJECT: SNIE 10-4-51: Communist Reactions to Certain US Courses of Action with Respect to Indochina

BACKGROUND

1. SNIE 10-4-51 was prepared on a crash basis for use in connection with NSC 5421, from which the stated assumptions and estimative requirements were derived. Final IAC action on 15 June is necessary in order to meet the NSC requirement for the estimate.

SUBSTANCE

2. The present text is agreed among the IAC representatives except as noted in the footnotes on pages 3, 6, 7, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, and 16. Some of these footnotes are mutually contradictory, with the text holding the middle ground. The Board recognizes that the problems presented call for judgments on matters regarding which there is no firm basis for any particular conclusions, and that a variety of opinions is therefore to be expected. The Board therefore recommends adoption of the present text, with its various footnotes, substantially as submitted.

3. G-2 considers Requirements 2 and 5 (pages 6 and 14) to be unrealistic in that the forces assumed to have been committed could not have achieved the success assumed for the purpose of the estimate. This is an operational rather than an intelligence judgment, but is said to have the sanction of General Ridgway. The Board holds that G-2's point does not preclude estimation of the Communist reaction to the situations assumed in the two Requirements.

4. The text (paragraph 1) holds that there is no firm basis for an estimate as to whether the Chinese Communists would intervene to save the Viet Minh, but that, if we must estimate, we would judge the odds to be "somewhat better than even" that they would

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

25X1

~~TOP SECRET~~

- 2 -

CONFIDENTIAL

do so. The JIG footnote (page 3) is a Delphic utterance which would evade even that much of an estimate. The Air Force footnote is to the same effect, but is expressed in the words of the Air Force footnote in NIE 11-5-51 (page 3), to which the AF representative was committed verbatim.

5. The Air Force and JIG footnotes on page 7 correspond to those on page 3 (see above), JIG now coming out with an estimate that the Chinese Communists would not intervene.

6. Chinese Communist intervention having been assumed for the purposes of the problem, the long JIG footnote on page 10 concludes that they would immediately withdraw in the face of nuclear bombardment of South China. All others considered (a) that so much of this footnote as was valid and pertinent was already fully covered in paragraphs 4, 10, and 12, and (b) that its conclusion was contradicted by the assumption and the considerations indicated in paragraph 10.

7. The JIG-AF footnote on page 12 would substitute "would probably" for "might eventually" in the text. Recognizing the desirability of making a more positive estimate, the Board and the other representatives considered that no one could be so positive about this matter and that "might eventually" was the proper language with which to indicate an important but highly speculative possibility.

8. The same considerations apply with respect to footnotes 2 and 3 on page 13. Here the text says "might" to indicate an important, but uncertain, possibility; footnote 2 (JIG-AF) in effect says "probably not"; footnote 3 (G-2) strives to give the effect of "probably would" without actually coming out with it.

9. In footnote 1 on page 13 and footnote 1 on page 15, G-2 takes the position that the USSR would never in any circumstances abandon the Viet Minh. Note that this is contradictory to the JIG footnote on page 10 and the JIG-AF footnote on page 12 as well as to the text.

10. Paragraphs 19 and 20 estimate that Communist China and the USSR would finally abandon Indochina. It may be that the estimate should end there. Paragraph 21 goes on to consider how the USSR would act if a cessation of hostilities could not be obtained on such terms. The text indicates a grave risk of general war, but a probability that the USSR would not deliberately initiate it. The AF and JIG footnote (pages 15-16) treat the paragraph as though it were primarily on deliberate initiation of general war.

CONFIDENTIAL

~~TOP SECRET~~

CHENMAN KENT

Assistant Director, O/NE